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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/634,684	08/05/2003	Thaddeus J. Mielnik	MEDZ 2 01312	7138

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EXAMINER

JOYNER, KEVIN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1797

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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06/25/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/634,684

Applicant(s)

MIELNIK ET AL.

Examiner

KEVIN C. JOYNER

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period **will** apply and **will** expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply **will**, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 March 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18,31,32 and 34-39 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 31 and 32 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 and 37-39 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 34-36 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claims 34-36 are objected to because of the following informalities: Claims 34-36 depend from canceled claim 33. Appropriate correction is required.

Double Patenting

2. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the “right to exclude” granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory

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double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

3. Claims 1-18 and 37-39 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-19 and 38-41 of U.S. Patent No. 7,265,253. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because all of the limitations of the instant application are met with respect to claim 1-19 and 38-41 of U.S. Patent No. 7,265,253. More specifically, claims 1-19 and 38-41 disclose a method for handling items potentially contaminated with a pathogenic agent, wherein the items are sorted in an enclosure and the sorted items are treated with a first decontaminant while the enclosure is treated with a second decontaminant. The patent continues to claim that the first and second decontaminants are ethylene oxide and hydrogen peroxide respectively.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments, see pages 8-11, filed on March 13, 2008, with respect to claims 1-18, 31-32 and 34-39 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection of claims 1-18, 31-32 and 34-39 has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, claims 1-18 and 37-39 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory

obviousness-type double patenting over claims 1-19 and 38-41 of U.S. Patent No. 7,265,253

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 31 and all claims depending therefrom are allowed.
6. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The closest prior art of record does not teach suggest or disclose a method for handling items potentially contaminated with a pathogenic agent comprising transporting the items to an enclosure and sorting the items using manipulators in the enclosure as recited in independent claim 31, wherein a portion of the sorted items are moved into a decontamination chamber and treated with a first decontaminant while the enclosure is treated with a second decontaminant. Furthermore as set forth in independent claim 31, the prior art does not teach that while a portion of the sorted items are being treated, the enclosure receives and sorts additional items. Ryan Jr. et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,071,437) discloses a method of decontaminating sorted items wherein the items are sorted by a manipulator in an enclosure and then sanitized in a chamber. Ryan Jr. does not disclose or suggest treating the enclosure that the items are sorted in with a second decontaminant. Wen (U.S. Patent No. 7,067,089) discloses a method for handling potentially contaminated items wherein the items are sorted and sent to a decontamination chamber. The decontamination chamber utilizes two sterilants to decontaminate said sorted items. Wen does not appear to disclose sorting

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the items in an enclosure wherein the enclosure is treated with a second decontaminant.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to KEVIN C. JOYNER whose telephone number is (571)272-2709. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gladys Corcoran can be reached on (571) 272-1214. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Jill Warden/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1797

KCJ